

25X1

REPORT

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

DATE DISTR. 8 Feb. 1952

NO. OF PAGES 3

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

25X1

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES, WITHIN THE MEANING OF TITLE 18, SECTIONS 793 AND 794, OF THE U. S. CODE, AS AMENDED. ITS TRANSMISSION OR REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS TO OR RECEIPT BY AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW THE REPRODUCTION OF THIS FORM IS PROHIBITED.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

25X1

25X1

25X1

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

CONFIDENTIAL

[illegible]

RETURN TO RECORDS CENTER
IMMEDIATELY AFTER USE
JOB 3 BOX 56-377

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ CONTROL - U. S. OFFICIALS ONLY

25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

-2-

of the Czechoslovak Government to end the crisis of the Czechoslovak Communist Party by arresting Deputy Prime Minister Rudolf Slansky. The Politburo of the Czechoslovak Communist Party was advised to proceed in that case with the greatest care and prudence.

4. At the insistence of Dr. Alexej Cepicka, Minister of Defense, (and the son-in-law of Klement Gottwald) the arrest of Slansky, who had already been held in confinement for several days, was publicly announced early on the morning of 27 November 1951.
5. Great uncertainty is now reigning in leading Communist circles in Prague as a result of Slansky's arrest because of the lack of precise information about the Soviet attitude toward the crisis in the Czechoslovak Communist Party, and especially about the real Soviet intentions in that matter. Prime Minister Antonin Zapotocky gave assurances about the Soviet consent to Slansky's arrest, but in some government circles fear is being expressed that the struggle between the Gottwald-Zapotocky group and the followers of Slansky may, at any time, be used as a pretext by the Soviets to restore order in Czechoslovakia in the manner most suitable to them.
6. Above all, doubts are being expressed openly about the psychological effect of Slansky's arrest on the working class in Czechoslovakia, already disappointed with the government's decision (Nov. 20, 1951) not to grant the traditional Christmas allowance (2-4 weeks' salary) this year. The workers are not in a mood to accept Slansky's arrest as a compensation for that loss, although Slansky as a dictator and a Jew has not been popular with them.
7. On the surface it would seem that the present Czechoslovak Communist leaders, Gottwald and Zapotocky, have by Slansky's arrest concentrated all governmental power in a few reliable hands. Well-informed Czechoslovak Communist circles, however, do not expect that this very risky action against Slansky will gain for them the support of the working class (already confused by Dr. Vlado Clementis' arrest in February, 1951, and skeptical of all the purges since) and will not lessen the silent but uncompromising opposition to them by the bourgeoisie, the Catholic Church and the peasantry. The same circles are also convinced that the effect of Slansky's arrest will not help Zapotocky's drive to raise production, on which his government's political future, from the Soviet point of view, exclusively depends. Instead, they believe that the economic difficulties now prevailing in Czechoslovakia, and the confusion in the Party resulting from the many internal quarrels, will produce apathy and depression among the workers. New and even greater dangers to the Gottwald-Zapotocky leadership than those produced by Slansky's intrigues may thus be expected.
8. There is an almost general fear in Prague that Slansky's arrest will not solve the problem of Slovak Separatism either (or stop the further blackmailing of the Central Government by Slansky's strongest Slovak exponent, Stefan Bastovansky). Bastovansky, of Hungarian origin, is still a member of the Central Committee of the Slovak Communist Party and is proposing

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ CONTROL - U. S. OFFICIALS ONLY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ CONTROL - U. S. OFFICIALS ONLY

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1

-3-

the annexation of Slovakia by the Soviet Union as the only means to avoid an open revolt there. In addition to Bastovansky, Prague also knows that Zdenek Fierlinger, Deputy Prime Minister and a member of the Praesidium of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, known as a regular informer of the Soviet Legation in Prague, is a supporter of the idea of complete absorption of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union as an independent Soviet Federal Republic. New intrigues from both Bastovansky and Fierlinger are thus expected in Prague; however, it is believed that the Soviet Government possibly does not feel that the time is yet ripe for the immediate total Sovietization of Czechoslovakia. Some time is still needed before total absorption can be achieved. It is assumed in Prague that Slansky's arrest, and probably his trial, will be tolerated for the time being by the Soviet Government, suffering itself from deep internal divisions, which result in its having no consistent policy toward the Satellites.

9. In case the present tension in Czechoslovakia is aggravated, it is generally believed in Prague that Gottwald, one of the founders of the Cominform and a disciple of Lenin, will not dare to risk open conflict with the Kremlin. Even his closest friends are convinced that at the culmination of the struggle, he will finally submit himself and his government unconditionally to Stalin's orders as he did in 1947 when he first accepted Marshall Plan aid and later refused it as a result of Soviet intervention.
10. Nevertheless, Communist economists in Prague admit that should the international tension in Europe diminish during 1952, the Soviets may use to their benefit the prestige gained in the West by the Czechoslovak President Klement Gottwald, who courageously removed Slansky, an arrogant representative of aggressive international Communism. Gottwald could then be used in eventual economic negotiations for the revival of trade between East and West. This belief, however, is not shared by old members of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, who do not consider Slansky's arrest as only an episode in the internal struggles of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, but as an event of European significance which will soon involve the future fate of Czechoslovakia and probably all the Soviet satellites. Without regard to the situation now existing in Yugoslavia, they consider Gottwald's victory as a temporary success that cannot endure. These experienced Communists accept the authorization of Gottwald's action against Slansky as a sign of growing unrest in the satellite countries. Under pressure the Soviets had to modify their policy toward the satellites. But this pressure may soon force the Soviet Government to decide, either in favor of complete absorption of the satellites by the Soviet Union, or in favor of a fundamental relaxation of the ties which bind them today to the Soviets and are endangering their whole existence. Slansky's arrest points to the urgency of such a decision, which cannot be avoided for long.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ CONTROL - U. S. OFFICIALS ONLY